

REMARKS

Claims 1, 2, 4-9, 14 and 15 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103 as being obvious over VandeHaar in combination with Civanelli. Claims 3 and 10-13 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103 as being obvious over VandeHaar, Civanelli, and Kawaguchi. Applicant respectfully traverses these rejections, and requests reconsideration of the claims, as amended.

Independent claims 1 and 9 have both been amended to include a limitation from cancelled claim 11. More particularly, claims 1 and 9 are directed towards a method for operating a washing machine, and require the step of "sensing for a reduced rotational speed of the washing basket or increased torque of the rotating washing basket caused by the fabrics frictionally engaging the flexible boot during rotation of the washing basket at the spin speed." Independent claim 12 similarly requires the step of "sensing for either increased torque or reduced rotational speed of the washing basket caused by the fabrics frictionally engaging the flexible boot during rotation of the washing basket at the spin speed." Independent apparatus claim 14 also requires a similar element, that is, "a sensor for sensing either an increased torque of the washing basket or a reduced rotational speed of the washing basket caused by the fabrics frictionally engaging the boot seal while the washing basket is spinning at the spin speed." These limitations, particularly as underlined, are not taught or suggested by the cited references.

The VandeHaar patent, which is owned by Applicant, addresses fabric and seal friction problems before entering the spin cycle, as described at column 2, lines 50-60. In particular, VandeHaar utilizes a flush operation or cycle to direct water adjacent the seal so as to dislodge any laundry caught in the seal. Thus, the VandeHaar '782 patent takes care of the problem before the spin cycle. Therefore, there is no motivation for adding sensors or sensing of the frictional

engagement of fabric with seal during the spin cycle. Accordingly, there is no basis to combine either Civanelli or Kawaguchi with VandeHaar to meet the claim limitations.

Furthermore, neither Civanelli nor Kawaguchi teach or suggest the sensing of fabric engagement with the seal during the spin cycle. In Civanelli, the sensing relates to unbalanced loads, rather than laundry engaging the seal. Also, the unbalanced load sensing in Civanelli takes place prior to the spin cycle. See column 2, lines 31-66. Similarly, Kawaguchi only senses for unbalanced loads, and not for laundry engaging the seal. Also, as seen in Figure 6 of Kawaguchi, the eccentric load is detected in step S21, before the spin cycle of step S23. Therefore, neither Civanelli nor Kawaguchi overcomes the deficiencies of VandeHaar.

Thus, independent claims 1, 9, 12 and 14 distinguish over the cited references so as to be in proper form for allowance.

Claims 2-8 and 19 depend from claim 1, claim 13 depends from claim 12, and claim 15 depends from claim 14. These depending claims should be allowable as depending from allowable base claims.

Furthermore, dependent claims 19 and 10, which depend from claims 1 and 9, respectively, each require the step of "stopping the rotation of the wash basket in response to sensing the increased torque or the reduced rotational speed of the washing basket." The Examiner cites the Kawaguchi patent as teaching this step. However, Kawaguchi senses for an unbalanced or eccentric load before the wash basket ever reaches the spin cycle, and thus cannot stop rotation during the spin cycle. Since the sensing step of independent claims 1 and 9 takes place during the spin cycle, stopping the rotation of the wash basket as required by claims 19 and 10 necessarily initiates during the spin cycle. Thus, Kawaguchi does not meet the limitations of

claims 19 and 10. Therefore, these claims further distinguish over the cited references, so as to be in proper form for allowance.

New independent claim 16 is also directed towards a method of operating a washing machine, and includes the steps of "initiating a spin cycle for the machine to extract water from laundry in the machine." Claim 16 further requires the step, "during the spin cycle, sensing for laundry engaging a boot seal adjacent an access opening in the machine." As discussed above, none of the cited references teach the step of sensing, during the spin cycle, for laundry engaging a boot seal, as required by claim 16. Therefore, claim 16 also distinguishes over the cited references so as to be allowable.

New claims 17 and 18 depend from claim 16, and should be allowable as depending from an allowable base claim.

Also, claim 18 requires the step of "stopping the spin cycle in response to sensing laundry engaging the boot seal." As discussed above with respect to claims 19 and 10, since Kawaguchi does not stop the rotation during the spin cycle, claim 18 distinguishes over the cited references. Furthermore, since Kawaguchi does not stop the spin cycle in response to the sensing of laundry engaging the boot seal, but rather stops the slower rotating wash basket in response to sensing of an eccentric load, claim 18 further distinguishes over the cited references. Accordingly, claim 18 is in proper form for allowance.


In view of the foregoing, Applicant respectfully requests that a Notice of Allowance be issued.

Please charge Deposit Account No. 26-0084 the amount of \$200.00 for one new independent claim over 3. No other fees or extensions of time are believed to be due in

connection with this amendment; however, consider this a request for any extension
inadvertently omitted, and charge any additional fees to Deposit Account No. 26-0084.

Reconsideration and allowance is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,


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